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In Memoriam.

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# DISCOURSE

PREACHED IN WORCESTER, OCT. 5, 1862,

ON

LIEUT. THOMAS JEFFERSON SPURR,

*Fifteenth Massachusetts Volunteers,*

WHO, MORTALLY WOUNDED AT THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM, DIED IN  
HAGERSTOWN, SEPT. 27TH FOLLOWING.

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BY ALONZO HILL.

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON AND SON,

5, WATER STREET.

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His soul to Him who gave it rose;  
God led him to its long repose,  
    Its glorious rest:  
And though the warrior's sun has set,  
Its light shall linger round us yet, —  
    Bright, radiant, blest.

His life is bright;—bright without spot it was,  
And cannot cease to be. No ominous hour  
Knocks at his door the tidings of mishap.  
Far off is he, above desire and fear.  
Oh, 'tis well with him!

## DISCOURSE.

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Titus ii. 14: — "WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US."

WHEN the late Lieut. Spurr — whose body, brought from the battle-field of Antietam, wrapped in his country's flag, we have just borne to our garden of graves — learned that his wounds were fatal, and felt the chill of death coming on, he expressed no disappointment and no regrets. He was fully aware, he said, when he gave himself to the cause of the Union, of the chances of war; that many must fall; that he had no right to claim exemption; and that he might as well be the victim of sacrifice as any. And now, when all was over, and he could do no more, he uttered the hope, that the example of his devotion, and the influence of his early removal, would not be lost; but that our young men, sharers of his own deepest thought, touched with sympathy, and warmed by the love they bore him, would be

encouraged in all true and noble enterprises in serving their country, their age, and their God.

It is, my friends, with the desire of interpreting and giving emphatic utterance to the language which fell from his lips in that sublime hour, and in that dimly lighted chamber in which he died, that I have come this morning with the consecrated words of Scripture, than which I know of none more touching: "Who gave himself for us." They are expressive of the grandest act which one human being may do for another; for no man can do more, or hath a sweeter death, than to lay down his life for his friends. They are great and noble words, and appeal to the very heart of humanity. They are upon the tongue that would eulogize; they are written in Italics on the pages of books; they are chiselled in marble: but applied to our Lord, and significant of his exalted, unselfish devotion, as they originally were, or to the young man, who yesterday, in the perfection of manly vigor, died for his country's sake, they are full of pathos and full of power: "He gave himself for us."

But in men's mouths they have been strangely perverted. They have been used to garnish the character of the mean, selfish, and sordid. They have been



uttered over the graves of the worthless. Let us pause a moment, and analyze the spirit which they are intended to express. Let us comprehend its breadth and limitations. We shall then be able to conceive of the amount of labor, hardship, and self-oblivion, which it demands.

I urge, then, that the spirit of devotion, implied in the act of giving one's self up for others, is very broad and comprehensive, and cannot be expressed by any narrow, superficial observance. It goes down into the very depths of the bosom; it discards all shallow inconsistencies and pretences, and consecrates all the faculties and affections. Men vainly attempt to put it on when it is not in the heart. They try a poor counterfeit, and, for "old family diamonds, give you false; and for gold rings, but brass." How many worthless claims to nobleness and disinterested love there are! how many wretched imitations of the temper of the gospel, like the repetitions this day of that formal act, expressive of profound sympathy, tenderness, and goodness, which Christ performed in Jerusalem! He taught the dignity of serving, by being himself the servant of all; and to set forth and embody the true spirit of devotion, that wonderful Being, whom the winds and waves obeyed, and who

might summon to his aid twelve legions of angels, “took a towel and girt himself” like a menial, “and washed the disciples’ feet.” The elder Church of Christendom reads the lesson as one for all time. Worshipping the letter, she has preserved the form, but with how little of the spirit! The pope and cardinals, followers of the lowly One, who had not where to lay his head, observe the command to do as he had done, and, on set days, repeat the rite; but they come forth from luxurious palaces in robes of state, and wash poor men’s feet with pomp and show and in vessels of gold. In token of his affection, Jesus took men to his palpitating bosom; went to their lowly habitations and wretched retreats; and in tones of tenderness, and words of sympathy, and acts of love, relieved them. But how many imitate the outward deed, while they will not renounce a single indulgence, or deny themselves a single gratification! They will stand, like the old monks, at the convent gate, and dole out alms in the garb of mendicants; but, when the gate is closed, will retire to their refectory, and spend the night in feasting and revelry. In a word, Jesus laid down his life for others; and there were no inconsistencies nor sad failures in that life, but every act of it proclaimed

his tender regard for their welfare, and his cheerful self-sacrifice for their sake. He bore the cross, and bowed his sacred head upon it, and died ; and every step along the dolorous way, self-forgetful, he spoke words of comfort, and scattered blessings as he went. But how many will bear pains as bitter as those of the cross, and give themselves for objects as selfish as ever touched the heart of man and turned it into stone ! For sordid gain, they will relinquish the endearments of home, breathe the tainted atmosphere and brave the perils of a distant clime ; for base pleasures, they will renounce the life-long attachments of wife and children, and all that ennobles our existence ; for the love of a brutal excitement, and the gratification of a hideous ambition, they will choose the tented field, plunge into the thickest of the fight, and revel amid slaughter and bloodshed, as if it were a joy. But, my hearers, what will all this avail, if, loose and unprincipled, they are false to their manhood, and are a stumbling-block to their brethren, weak, tempted, and travelling, even as they are, on their dim, shadowy way ? They may be generous and public-spirited, impetuous and daring, the bravest of the brave : but if their personal habits are adverse to goodness ; if they are coarse, brutal, and self-seek-

ing; if they freely adopt the customs, at the table and in social life, which are an offence and a snare; though they give their bodies to be burned, and half their goods to feed the poor, and die in the very front of the battle, — we cannot say of them, “They gave themselves for us.” They have given themselves a sacrifice to their unhallowed pride, their low ambition, their selfish brutality; and can have no place in a people’s gratitude. They are mean men, and cannot be named with honors; for so sacred a thing in the eyes of Heaven is each man’s individual trust, and the influence which he may exert, that, whatever else he may be and do, if he cast away his sceptre, and, by the falseness of his living, serve to tempt the weak and seduce them into sin, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

No, my friends: call not him heroic or noble or self-sacrificing, whatever his public service may be, who in private is self-seeking, self-indulgent, and dishonest. Those great words are only for the sublime, disinterested spirit, which, renouncing all selfish considerations, contemplates with a profound faith things unseen, regards fidelity in the minutest as well as the largest trust above all things, and with prompt cheer-

fulness lays the dearest object upon the altar of sacrifice. It is the spirit which seems to envelop us as with a sacred atmosphere, when we reverently take into our hands the New Testament, and strive to comprehend the life and trace the footsteps of that marvellous Being whose history it contains. It is the spirit which artists have endeavored to embody in marble and on canvas, when they have chiselled or painted that strangely expressive face, with its look of sweet trust, and its unsounded depths of love and majesty; the same which they strove to express in the form and features of sainted heroes and martyrs, so calm and still, and full of a divine beauty. It is the spirit which stirred the bosoms of the old knights in the ages of faith, when they chose, for instance, for the motto on the escutcheon of the fierce house of Douglass, "Tender, but true;" or for that on the crest of England's crown, "Shame to him who thinks evil!" — the same which moved over the souls of the Sidneys and the Hampdens and the Russells, — men of so noble a nature, so unselfish, so chivalric, so thoroughly good, that, when they passed away, it was felt that a sudden eclipse had come on; and the whole land gave itself to mourning amid the exclamations, "We shall never see their like again." It

is the spirit which animated the grim old warrior, Frederic I. of Prussia. It was reported to him, in the midst of the battle's fray, "Your son is killed!" "Woe is me!" he cried. "My son is slain; but Christ lives. On, my men!" placing principle high above every personal consideration, fidelity to duty above all present peace;—the same, more than all, which consecrated the life and hallows the repose of the hero who sleeps on the banks of the Potomac, and whose sacred repose is invaded by the awful sounds of conflicting armies. A noiseless influence goes from that tomb, mightier than the din of battle, and more moving than the eloquence of senates. Yes, it was well that the great fight of freedom should be fought, and the work which he began should be completed, on the spot so dear to his great heart, where his awful and majestic form, as it used to appear to our fathers in the smoke of the battle, shall seem again to arise, and check every emotion of unhallowed ambition, and breathe constancy and courage into the bosoms of our brave young defenders, who, taught at their mothers' knee to revere his memory, can do nothing inconsistent with that trust in God, that personal purity, that love of liberty, and that supreme devotion to country, which won for him his victory. He gave

himself for us; and that is the reason why he will remain among us, a living power, as long as the nation shall stand.

I have dwelt, my friends, upon these thoughts, because it seems to me I discern in our people a disposition to honor men who are unworthy of honor, and to reward men with a nation's confidence who seek power only for its own sake, court military glory for the distinction which it confers, hold office for its emoluments, and accumulate trusts that they may the more easily betray them. God save us, in this great hour of the country's peril, from the folly of committing its life to the keeping of those who are faithless to others, and are not true to themselves! I linger on this train of thought, because I would bring before you, in illustration, the noble young man who is in all our hearts to-day, and show you what a great thing he did — none greater on this earth — when he gave himself for us. I feel that he has a claim on our especial mention here, because he was a child of this parish, — honored, loved, and mourned; and affords a beautiful example of that self-sacrificing devotion which it is our prayer to God may be formed, and which it is our labor, day by day, to form, in the heart of this community.



Thomas Jefferson Spurr — a grandson of Gen. John Spurr, and Dr. Dan Lamb, of Charlton, once widely known in the south part of this county, the son of the late Col. Samuel D. Spurr — was born in this city, Feb. 2, 1838; consequently, had reached only the immature age of twenty-four years. Early left an orphan by the death of his father, he was committed to the sole care of his mother. As we grow older, the years come and go with ever-hastening step; and to my vision it seems but yesterday, when, a little boy, he was led by her hand to this, our religious home, to begin that course of Christian training, without which all other influences are worthless. Then I have the picture of a youth, true to his early promise, constant in his attendance on the Sunday school, the Bible class, and the services of the Church; always carrying with him that look of seriousness and earnest thought which we are wont to ascribe to those whom God has chosen. I think of him as he appeared in the successive grades of your public schools; careful and painstaking in his studies, always foremost among his companions, gentle and affectionate in his ways. Then I think of him as passing on to our neighboring University; simple and unaffected in his manners, genial in his dispositions, warm in his attachments, and winning



troops of friends, but never for an instant diverted from the one great object of his ambition ; never forsaking his early habits ; term by term, pursuing a course of quiet industry, and securing distinguished success among his fellows. In the freshman year of his college life, he was one of the leading scholars of his class ; and with his good classical attainments, his decided mathematical tastes, might confidently have anticipated the largest share of college honors.

But, in the midst of his successes and anticipations, he was interrupted by one of the sorest visitations that can befall the young student,—an affection of the eyes, which compelled him to close his books, and retire from his college associations. He repaired to the country. He made a voyage to Fayal, that beautiful island of the Azores ; and found rest and refreshment amid its tropical luxuriance and delightful friendships, always so readily proffered to the sick stranger there. He returned improved, but not restored. He went back to his college studies, but not with his first fresh hope ; for, during his absence, his class had left him behind, and he must now grope his tangled and matted way by means of eyes not his own. He was compelled to employ a reader. He was thrown behind his companions in the career of

competition ; but not behind the foremost in the noble simplicity of his character, the patient bearing of his trial, his cheerful acquiescence, and unfaltering resolution to do what he could. He took his degree at the University in Cambridge in 1858 ; and, as a proof of the estimation in which he was held by his associates, I need only say, that he was elected a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, the chief literary association of the institution, admission to which is the object of the young student's great ambition, and whose honors are bestowed as a mark of distinction on leading scholars : but, with a tenderness and generosity most creditable to those concerned, he was chosen, not for what he was, but for what he would have been, except for the heavy calamity which had befallen him, and which, in one of less stubborn will, would have closed, without a struggle, all the avenues to literary and professional success. On leaving college, Thomas entered the Law School at Cambridge, and afterwards the law-office of the Hon. George Frisbie Hoar of this city ; always laboring under a sense of disadvantage from his infirmity, but uncomplaining, cheerfully bearing, and resolved, as others had done before him, to conquer success, though in the face of difficulties all but insurmountable.

But Providence was guiding ; and another career was opening, in which, not soundness of sight, but health of body, firmness of mind, energy, self-possession, courage, and nobleness, alone are indispensable. In the spring of the last year, he closed again his studies, and sailed, with a young friend and relative, for Russia ; returning through Germany, England, and France. It was there, on the shores of the Baltic, amid scenes so novel, strange, and absorbing, that he first heard the tidings of the great revolt which has thrown its dark shadow over a prospered and happy land ; and, from that moment, I can well conceive of the stir and tumult of his bosom. An awful calamity had come to his country, and he in ease and safety, and amid the fascinations of a foreign city ! she, the kind mother of us all, in peril, — she, at whose gentle bosom he had been nurtured, and under whose tender nursing he had received all that makes life on earth a blessing, — and he not there to strike for her a blow ! I have looked upon our dear land from afar, from mid-ocean and from foreign shores, where speech is restrained by tyrant power, and the very air is oppressive and stifling ; and I know what heart-yearnings he must have felt, how the winds must have seemed to linger that were to waft him over, and the days to

be tardy in their coming that should see him once more in his now troubled home.

At length, he arrived. But for him, as for thousands of our noblest and best young men, the choicest of our youth, the very hope of our country, there was no rest. Thomas sought and received a commission of first lieutenant in the Fifteenth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers, at the commencement of the present year, — a year so eventful to the country, so tragical to him. He was now to gird on the sword and haversack, and enter scenes where separation, hardship, exposure, and danger from sickness and wounds, would grow familiar; and how much it must have cost him to sever again ties so intimate and tender as those which bound him to his home! But when he once felt the burthen of duty laid upon him; when his ear had once caught the soul-enkindling words, “Leave father and mother” and the endearments of home for freedom and country and Christ’s sake, — he was not one to linger; and when I saw him, on the eve of his departure, turn from his heart’s treasure to encounter the great unknown of his future lot, he seemed to me as one, who, having conquered in the inward strife, had thrown off all misgivings and fears, and was now going, under the influence of a noble inspiration, to fight the battles of

freedom and humanity, — going under the shelter of a protecting Providence, and ready to accept, with equal cheerfulness, whatever that Providence for him and for his might send. He seemed to dwell apart in his thought from the great crowd, and commune with the spiritual and unseen, to walk in close companionship with sainted heroes, to live in distant ages, and to hear the voices of approval and holy cheer from those whom his self-sacrificing devotion would bless ; and he stood before us as one transfigured, in manly beauty, and with an almost visible glory around his head.

Lieut. Spurr immediately joined his regiment on the Potomac, and earnestly applied himself to the strange tasks that were before him, — tasks we little know how formidable, until we remember his rare conscientiousness and his severe interpretation of duty. He was fresh from the scenes of civil life, — the home, the office, and the leisure of travel, — and was placed over men who had stood in the face of battle, and grown familiar with the details of the soldier's work. Besides, his senior officer, from whom he might have received help, was away ; and alone, performing a double service, he encountered every embarrassment of his untried post. And much is it to their honor as well as his to be able to say, that, in a very difficult

position, — a position in which subordinates jealously watch and readily censure, — he acquitted himself with such skill and tact, that he overcame every obstacle, and not only secured the respect, but won the affectionate attachment, of his men. “He was universally beloved,” is the unvarying testimony of his companions in arms. “We loved him as a brother.” “All of us were in tears who stood around the spot where he lay in his agonies.” Nor is it difficult to understand why they loved him so well. He loved them, and gave himself for them. He devoted himself unreservedly to his duties as a soldier, and to the welfare of the men of his command. He was asked if he were acquainted with the officers of another regiment? He replied, “A soldier who does his duty has no time to make acquaintance.” His own, the war-worn Fifteenth, a part though it was of the consecrated host enrolled for the country’s redemption, was his especial trust. They saw and bare witness to the disinterestedness and fidelity of his service; how true and manly and devoted he was; how he bore them on his heart, spared them as he was able, shared in their toils, and spoke words of encouragement. For he loved them with that intensity of affection which only they know who have encountered common perils and borne com-



mon sufferings together. They had participated in the discomforts of the camp in the swamps of the Chickahominy, had kept picket-guard, and stood before the enemy at Fair Oaks and Savage's Station. They had moved side by side in the seven-days' retreat, fighting from dawn to evening twilight, marching from twilight again till dawn; and well might they speak kindly and gently and with honest pride of their young Lieutenant, so refined, so soldierly in his bearing, and so quick in his sympathies. For, I repeat, he was loving and tender, and brave and heroic. At the close of the wearisome retreat, when one more blow was to be struck, and his command were summoned to Malvern Hill, and he was too sick to lead them, I am told by his chaplain that he was altogether unmanned, when, left behind, he saw them going up to the post of danger, and he could not be there to share it with them. When he had received the fatal wound of which he died, his sole thoughts were of his officers and men. They rushed to carry him from the field; but the enemy pressed. "Do not stay for me," he cried in that awful moment; "take care of yourselves:" and in the next instant he was a prisoner. Found again, two days after, by a party of skirmishers, his first words were, "For God's sake, send a surgeon here at once,

not for my sake, but for the sake of these poor men, who are suffering terribly." In his troubled sleep, he would seem to be issuing orders for their comfort and refreshment: and, in his waking hours, he said, "he hoped his company would be satisfied with him, and that he had earned their confidence; for he was not conscious of having a single thought of himself after the first volley was fired." No: not of yourself did you think, young hero, brave soldier, soldier also of the cross, in that agonizing hour, but of the absorbing cause, and of the men by whom, under God, you were to win it.

But I hasten on. The 17th of September will be marked as a dark day in our New-England history, like the "sorrowful night" in Mexican story; for, on that day, whole platoons of our troops were cut down, and the brave and beautiful fell in their high places. The regiment to which Lieut. Spurr was attached had been removed from the James River, with the division under Gen. Sedgwick, to the Heights of Maryland; and were drawn out in the field of battle, occupying the foremost line, and exposed to the deadliest fire of the half-concealed enemy. They stood upon a rising ground, not far from the rail fence which enclosed the field of standing corn, henceforth to be familiar to our Ameri-



can youth, as the rye-fields of Waterloo are to those of England ; and about nine o'clock in the morning came that volley all along the opposing army which has sent such anguish into so many of our New-England homes. Our young friend was standing a little in advance of his company, engaged in forming the broken front ; and there received his fatal wound, and fell where he stood. Almost in an instant, there was confusion, — the rush of the enemy and a short retreat, — and he was left to their tender mercies, bleeding on the ground, while the battle all day raged around. But, in the midst of common sufferings, how speedily are foes changed into friends ! But a moment ago, they were in opposing ranks, sending at each other the missiles of death, attended with smoke and carnage ; but now the heart of humanity is touched, and they gather around the wounded soldier. Among them are the familiar countenances of those who studied with him in the halls of college, bearing no longer the grim visage of war. They speak to him words of sympathy ; they place to his fevered lips cooling drinks ; they remove him from the heat of the sun to the shade of a tree ; they shelter him from the cold night air with their blankets. Those who were present tell of the awful stillness which followed that day of terrors. I am

sure, if, during these weary hours of suffering for him, of rest for man and for beast, he had intervals of consciousness, he would be reminded by those kindly faces, and the silent stars that were looking so tranquilly down, that there was an eye of infinite compassion fixed upon him, and the arms of infinite tenderness stretched over him. God was there. He had done a soldier's duty, and God's peace was his.

The battle was on Wednesday. Two days after (on Friday), he was seen, by a party of skirmishers of the New-York Thirty-first, — having been removed from the spot where he fell, — lying on a bed of straw, in a yard a few rods distant, in the midst of a host of wounded fellow-soldiers of both armies. On Saturday (the next day), he was found by friends who had been sent in search of him. His wounds were dressed, and he was carried two or three miles to a large Union hospital. On Monday, he was removed again, by the aid of the mayor of our city, to Hagerstown, the distance of some twelve miles from the field of battle ; where, at the private residence of one of its citizens, kindly thrown open to him, he received all the aid and solace which unbounded Christian sympathy and the best medical skill could bestow. Thither his own family — through a series of events

which seem providential, and which they can never cease to remember with heartfelt gratitude — were conducted, on Wednesday evening, to the house where the sufferer lay ; and there, with powers unimpaired, the memory clear and exact, and a consciousness of duty done, and well done, with intense affections gushing out from his lips and a look of ineffable sweetness on his countenance, he was spared to them two days longer.

It would be invading the sanctity of private grief, if I were to relate to you all that was said and done in these sacred hours. One who was present has told me that he never witnessed such scenes of composure, such tenderness of love, such serene trust, such readiness to go. As he has recalled circumstance after circumstance, I have been reminded of those ages, when faith, if not more real, awakened more enthusiasm, and found vent in more vivid expression, than it now does, — those great times, when the martyr, gazing upward, seemed to see the heavens opened, and sainted forms bending over, and smiling, and beckoning him to come. I am reminded of the death-scenes of the hero of Lucknow, — all calm and buoyant and cheerful in his lonely tent, while the sounds of the cannon were still heard in the distance, — worn with

sicknesses and the waste of war, and yet exulting in the exuberance of his kindred and home affections and the thoughts of heaven, exclaiming with his last breath, "Now I am ready." Our dear young friend, though he had just come from the battle's strife, had brought with him no earthly passion, no bitterness towards those who had taken his young life, but forgiveness and gratitude instead for those who had pitied and succored him in his great distress. He spoke of heaven as familiar to his thoughts, and of one who is an angel there. He spoke of the motives which had prompted him to give himself to the service of his country. He spoke as a soldier, and thanked God, that, though a few hours a wounded prisoner, he was spared the humiliation of delivering his sword into the hands of her enemies. It had been struck from his grasp, and it was only the empty scabbard which they bore away as a trophy. He spoke as a son, a brother, and friend. He remembered all, he forgot none; and when he had said and done all, as if conscious that his hours were numbered, just before the dawn of a new day, his last on earth, he asked her, who sat by the dying bed of her son, to join him in one more prayer before he should go. He offered a prayer, which they who heard can never for-

get. It was the last breathing of affection for those nearest and dearest,—the utterance of the heart's gratitude for the presence of kind physicians and friends who had soothed his hours of terrible anguish, and especially of her who had been kindest and tenderest. For, my hearers, there is one image which years and leagues and the rough usages of the camp can never erase from the memory; there is one name which the New-England soldier, in his sicknesses, wounds, loneliness, and desertion, takes upon his lips,—the same image on which Jesus gazed from the bitter cross, the same name which he uttered with his dying breath. At nine o'clock on Saturday morning, the eleventh day after the battle, it was perceived that Thomas's strength was failing; that he was fast passing away. He fixed his eyes in one last gaze on a familiar countenance; he spoke in tones of cheer; he uttered the word "Mother!" he crossed his hands upon his bosom, and fell asleep.

And so he gave himself for us, that you and I might enjoy the pleasant heritage which our fathers left us, and that we might transmit the venerable institutions which are the life of our life to our children's children. He offered himself, that he might avert the nation's last dread calamity, and that there

might still be hope for man. He laid himself down on the altar of sacrifice for our sakes, and has gone as a milk-white lamb without blemish and garlanded. He has gone to join the crowd of young Christian heroes who have won their battles, and already wear the crown. He has gone to swell the roll of martyrs offered by our venerable University; to join Peabody and Dwight, his predecessors by a few years; Putnam, with whom he studied; and Lowell, his class-mate and friend. He has gone to join the saintly company, the pure, the gentle, the devoted of all ages and climes, the companions of his youth, and the intimates of his maturer years.

And, if he has given himself for us, shall we not give ourselves for one another? Alas for us, if, with these rich examples of Christian fidelity before us, we can forget our high calling, forego a noble enthusiasm, and give ourselves to an all-absorbing selfishness! Better a thousand times suffer privations and hardships, wounds and imprisonments, and the carnage of the battle-field, than be guilty of one hour's unfaithfulness to duty, and one act of disloyalty to country and to God. For how stands the case? What is the lesson of religion? "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his

friends." To be able to do this is the principal thing. It is the triumph of inward might over outward vicissitude; the victory of faith over the soul's instinctive apprehensions, the pains of the body, and the bitterness of death. It is a transformation of feebleness into strength; and a lifting-up of the creatures of earth, even while the clod clings to them, into those regions where angelic natures dwell, and the ministries of love and the bliss of heroic devotion are complete.







## A P P E N D I X.

## F U N E R A L.

THE body of Lieut. SPURR accompanied the family on their return to New England, under the especial charge of Isaiah, a faithful body-servant, who had been in his employ from the beginning of the campaign. He was a freeman of color, born among slaves, of more than common intelligence, devotedly attached to his young master, who, he said, "had been mighty good to him." He had waited in his tent, followed him in his marches, and hung around the field in all his battles. He was of the party that bore him from within the enemy's lines; the others being Dr. Haven, and Capt. Baldwin and Lieut. Washburn of Gen. Devens's staff. He stood by his bed in all his hours of terrible suffering, and ministered to his wants. The remains were buried on Thursday, Oct. 2, from the residence of his brother-in-law, Hon. Mr. Hoar. Although it was in the midst of the severest autumn storm, the house was thronged; and, while the heavens were weeping as in sympathy, none were unaffected. Not least touching was the spectacle of the humble friend, who stood like a bronze statue beside the coffin through the whole service, while the tears silently stole down his cheeks. Set to guard the sacred relics, he did not leave them, from the hour of quitting Hagerstown, until they were deposited in the place of their rest,—the beautiful cemetery in Worcester. In order to complete

the picture, it may be added, that the coffin was decorated with the folds of the American flag; while there rested on it a large cross, made of fresh flowers,—the cherished gift of young companions of happier days,—the emblem of that sustaining faith, without which such scenes of agonizing grief could never be borne.

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### LETTERS.

The following extracts of letters will serve more than to confirm the statements made in the body of the discourse:—

*From Brig.-Gen. Devens.*

WILLIAMSPORT, MD., Sept. 23.

Our dear Tom Spurr is very dangerously wounded. Yesterday, I went over to Hagerstown (nine miles from here) with the medical director of the division, Dr. O'Leary. Tom had just been brought there. He has been examined by the doctor, who thinks our dear boy has a chance, but only a chance, to live; but that he will survive a week or two. He is calm and courageous. He said nothing; but I think his situation is fully understood by him. The wound is in the upper part of the thigh. Amputation would be useless. God grant that the dear fellow may go through in safety! for he is brave as he is tender and affectionate.

C. D., JR.

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*From Lieut.-Col. Kimball.*

Head-quarters Fifteenth Reg. Mass. Vol.,  
WARRENTON, VA., Nov. 18, 1862.

The death of Lieut. Spurr was a sad blow to the regiment. His place cannot be filled. He came among us a stranger to us

all ; but by his manly traits of character, his kind, noble, and generous nature, he won the esteem of all, — officers and men. He was ever faithful to his trust ; and his courage and bearing were undoubted.

His memory will be most dearly cherished by his comrades ; and they will always point with pride to his private virtues and his military career, as such as it would be alike honorable and manly to follow.

His noble bearing on the battle-field of Antietam, where he refused to be carried to the rear when mortally wounded, was worthy of the man, the hero, he was, and won the praise of all his companions.

J. W. KIMBALL, *Lieut.-Col. Commanding.*

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*From Dr. Haven, Surgeon Fifteenth Massachusetts Volunteers.*

BOLIVAR HEIGHTS, Oct. 10, 1862.

Being, as I am, the only one in the regiment with whom his acquaintance dates back from boyhood, and he holding the same relation towards me, a double tie brought us together.

Were private friendship, even, set aside, I should still feel a strong desire to express my great admiration for his many virtues, his earnest devotion, and his manly fortitude ; for a character developed by the events of the last year, of which you may well be proud. Joining the regiment, as he did, at a time when the opposition to strangers was strong ; when much was to be learned ; when the duties of every officer were severe ; and when, in addition, the entire management of the company was thrown upon him, — it is no small meed of praise to say that he overcame all these obstacles, and that no one in the regiment was more esteemed and respected by the men and his brother-officers.

At the battle of Fair Oaks, I chanced to be in close proximity to him during the severest of the engagement, and can bear per-

sonal testimony to his cool bearing and undaunted courage. It will never cease to be a source of regret to me; that chance did not place me near him at the moment when struck by the fatal bullet; for although the result could hardly have been different, and although all efforts at immediate removal might have been unavailing, yet at least the attempt would have been made. It grieved me much, too, that military duty forbade my accompanying Thomas away from the hospital, even as far as the nearest city; though I felt grateful for the opportunity afforded to be with him, more or less, during several days, and to do that little which my office and the circumstances allowed.

I have been expressing only my own private feelings. The frequent scenes of suffering and death, and the constant necessity for action, naturally blunt, for a time, the sensibilities of the soldier; but, in the season of rest, the better feelings return. Among those who remain of this crippled regiment, the memory of Thomas, brave and faithful, will ever be hallowed. It cannot be unwelcome to you to know how much we all feel our great loss; how many of us are conscious that we could better have been spared; and how deeply all sympathize with you in your severe affliction.

S. FOSTER HAVEN, JR.

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*From Dr. Sargent, of this city, who kindly accompanied the family to Hagerstown, and was present to the close.*

WORCESTER, Thursday Morning, Nov. 20, 1862.

I shall consider myself as more than compensated for any sacrifice I have made, by the elevating and purifying influence of that death-bed,—the death of the Christian patriot, of the excellent son and brother, whose translation in the clearness of his intellect, and even the fulness of wisdom, was such as I never before witnessed.

JOSEPH SARGENT.

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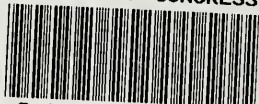








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